**Marketing and Society (MK-268)**

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<tr>
<th>Course Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Names of the Course Coordinator</td>
<td>Rohit Varman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of the Instructors</td>
<td>Rohit Varman</td>
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**Course Background and Objectives:**

This course examines the societal impact of contemporary marketing practices. It focuses on how the dissemination of marketing knowledge and marketization can influence society through the decisions made by public policy makers, corporations, and non-profit marketers.

This course on marketing and society draws upon critical marketing. Critical marketing has emerged as a significant area of enquiry in marketing theory in the last few years. Extant theory in critical marketing is eclectic and embraces a range of issues that include consumer vulnerability, marketization, gender discrimination, creation of market myths, environmental degradation, and disenchantment among consumers to mention a few. Critical marketing helps students to broaden their horizons by focusing on issues of justice, equality, sustainability, and freedom from a wider societal perspective. In this course, students will develop an understanding of marketers’ responsibilities and impact on society by exploring a range of current issues and criticisms facing marketing. In doing so, students will understand the wider social, cultural, and political context of marketing.

Apart from the usual method of lecture, the course will also extensively use films as tools for learning. In addition, the course will present an opportunity to students to be creative and to use drama and film-making as forms of project work.

Following are the broad course objectives:

- Explore contemporary debates on problems with markets and marketing.
- To provide students with a broad exposure to critical theory in marketing.
- To help students to think about alternatives to markets and marketing.

**Text:**

Course Package to include the prescribed readings.

**Evaluation Method:**

Class Participation: 30
Project: 40 (20 marks presentation; 20 marks report) End Term
Exam: 30

**Class Participation.** Students are expected to regularly attend classes and be on time. Attendance will contribute to the participation grade. But attendance is not sufficient. Students are expected to read assigned materials, ask questions, and contribute to class discussions. I may call on students to volunteer their point of view or do role playing to encourage debates.
**Exam.** A final exam will be held at the end of the term and cover material from the entire course. All assigned readings and in-class discussion are testable. The format of the exam will consist of both short and long answer questions.

**Project.** Projects are to be completed by groups. Students will make presentations and submit a paper based on a topic of their choice in consultation with the instructor. Students can choose to present their work as a film, drama, or power point. The final paper will review and discuss any relevant literature concerning group’s topic of interest. Submissions should be no more than 15 pages (typed, double spaced, and use 12 point font with one inch margins).
# Session Plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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| 1-2      | **Topic:** Corporations, Markets, and Society  
**Film:** The Shock Doctrine  
**Readings:**  
1. Klein, Noami: The Shock Doctrine (Book excerpts)  
2. Boltanski L and Thevenot L: On Justification (Book excerpt) |
| 3-4      | **Topic:** Marketing and Vulnerable Consumers  
**Film:** Fire in the Blood  
**Readings:**  
2. Jackall, Robert: Moral Mazes (Book excerpt) |
| 5-6      | **Topic:** Marketing and Gender  
**Film:** Gender in Advertising  
**Readings:**  
| 7-8      | **Topic:** Marketing, Consumption, and Environment  
**Readings:**  
1. Srivastava, Aseem and Kothari, Ashish: Churning the Earth (Book excerpts)  
**Guest Speaker** |
| 9-10     | **Topic:** Myths and consumer culture  
**Film:** Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse  
**Readings:**  
1. Klein, Naomi: No Logo (Book excerpts)  
| 11-12    | **Topic:** Resisting Consumer Culture  
**Film:** Culture Jam  
**Reading:**  
| Date   | Topic: Propaganda and Political Marketing  
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13-14  | Reading:  
|        | 1. Bernays, Edward: Propaganda (Book excerpts)                                         |
|        | Guest Speaker                                                                          |
| 15-16  | Topic: Social Marketing and Marketization of Welfare  
|        | Film: Social Entrepreneurship                                                           |
|        | Readings:  
|        | 1. Hancock, Graham: Lords of Poverty (Book excerpts)                                   |
| 17-18  | Topic: Markets, Modern Slavery, and Violence  
|        | Film: Labels from a Global City                                                         |
|        | Readings:  
| 19-20  | Topic: Project presentations as short films, documentaries, plays, or regular power points |

**APPENDIX: FILMS**

Information on some of the films included in the course is provided below (the descriptions provided by the films’ producers are reproduced verbatim):

1. **Labels from a Global City**
   
   An assembly line of hands staple labels with fancy logos and the sale price in Dollars or Pounds. Young women work under the fear of severe verbal abuse. The testimonies that emerge from within large factories producing garment for global labels are chilling. In 2006, a small but significant trade union was formed in Bangalore, The Garment and Textile Workers’ Trade Union. ‘Labels from a Global City’ documents the work of GATWU in an industry that uses coercion and bullying to keep the production line going.

2. **Fire in the Blood**
   
   An intricate tale of 'medicine, monopoly and malice', Fire in the Blood tells the story of how Western pharmaceutical companies and governments aggressively blocked access to low-cost AIDS drugs for the countries of Africa and the global south in the years after 1996 - causing ten million or more unnecessary deaths - and the improbable group of people who decided to fight back.
3. **Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse**

Media scholar Sut Jhally explores the devastating personal and environmental fallout from advertising, commercial culture, and rampant American consumerism. Ranging from the emergence of the modern advertising industry in the early 20th century to the full-scale commercialization of the culture today, Jhally identifies one consistent message running throughout all of advertising: the idea that corporate brands and consumer goods are the keys to human happiness. He then shows how this powerful narrative, backed by billions of dollars a year and propagated by the best creative minds, has blinded us to the catastrophic costs of ever-accelerating rates of consumption. The result is an ideal teaching tool for courses that look at commercialism, media culture, social well-being, environmental issues, and the tensions between capitalism and democracy.

4. **Culture Jam: Hijacking Commercial Culture**

Culturejam: Hijacking Commercial Culture delivers a fascinating rap on the 20th Century movement called Culture Jamming. Pranksters and subversive artists are causing a bit of brand damage to corporate mindshare. Jammers, cultural commentators, a billboard advertiser and a constitutional lawyer take us on a wild roller coaster ride through the back streets of our mental environment. Stopping over in San Francisco, New York's Times Square, and Toronto, we catch the jamming in action with Batman-inspired Jack Napier of the Billboard Liberation Front, Disney arch-enemy Reverend Billy from the Church of Stop Shopping and Media Tigress Carly Stasko. Culturejam asks: Is Culture Jamming civil disobedience? Senseless vandalism? The only form of self defense left?

5. **The Shock Doctrine**

The film is based on a 2007 book (The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism) by the Canadian author and social activist Naomi Klein. In the book, Klein argues that neoliberal free market policies (as advocated by the economist Milton Friedman) have risen to prominence in some countries because of a deliberate strategy of "shock therapy". This centers on the exploitation of national crises to push through controversial policies while citizens are too emotionally and physically distracted by disasters or upheavals to mount an effective resistance. The book suggests that some man-made events, such as the Iraq War, were undertaken with the intention of pushing through such unpopular policies in their wake.